

Episode 151 Kim McElroy

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7s Journey on. 1s Lies within the trails we ride. You're listening to The Journey On podcast with Warrick Schiller. Warrick is a horseman, trainer, international clinician, and author who helps empower horse people from all over the world with the skills, knowledge and mindsets needed to create trusting partnerships with their horses. Warwick offers a free seven day trial to his comprehensive online video library that includes hundreds of full length training videos and several home study courses and videos. Warwickshire. Com just because you see what you get. Everyone, welcome back to the Journey On podcast. I'm your host, Warrick Schiller, and one of my previous guests was Linda Chernoff and Linda. Apart from writing, The Dow of Equus also wrote a book called The Way of the Horse Equine Archetypes for Self-Discovery. So there was a guidebook and a card deck in, uh, in that particular pack. And today my guest is Kim McElroy. Kim is the artist who painted the card deck of Linda's Way of the horse equine archetypes for self-discovery. And I'm just going to read you a Kim's bio of her website. It says Kim McElroy has been drawn to horses since childhood, and as soon as she could hold a cri on, this manifested as her art. For more than 30 years, she's been known for her intuitive understanding of the sentient nature of horses and her ability to infuse her art with their spiritual energy. She distills this energy into expression of the horse's quintessential essence in ways that transcend how they are traditionally defined. Through her incredible mastery of pastels and her talent in writing about her visionary insights, she conveys the power and beauty of the horse's form. Yet more than that, she offers us a timeless glimpse into its soul. And after having a conversation with Kim, I would say that's a that's a very good representation, not only of her art,

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but of the way she views horses and the way she views the world. So I hope you guys enjoy this chat as much as I did recording it. 4s Tim McElroy. Welcome to the Journey On podcast.

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Thank you so much. Happy to be here.

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So you you seem to be one of those very lucky people whose passion ends up being their, uh, career, what they do for living and so on. I kind of explore. Yeah. You ended up being one of those lucky people. So why don't you tell us what exactly you do? And then we're going to unravel how you got there.

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I will, thank you. I'm a visionary equine artist. Um, I paint horses in ways that they're not traditionally defined. And I work in pastel. Um, I've been doing this for almost 40 years.

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Okay, let's unravel that. Can you tell us exactly? You told us that a visionary equine artist is someone who portrays them in ways they're not usually portrayed. Okay, so we've got rid of what they're usually portrayed in. How do you portray them?

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Yeah, well, in the beginning when I started painting horses, I was new to the horse world. Um, I had loved horses as a child and grew up wanting to be a horse playing horse and not having much access to horses until I was about eight years old. Um, and that was my introduction to horses at a boarding stable where my parents signed me up for lessons. So that was my first introduction to what people even really did with horses. Other than reading *Misty of Chincoteague* and some of the, you know, the the black beauty in those books. But. My my dream world of horses, uh, collided with the real world of horses. And, um, when I began being around horses and seeing what people did with them, I was I was confused. So I thought, well, I must have just made it all up. But I just kept drawing, uh, that world all through my childhood and, and into school, and and I was rewarded for my art, and people loved it, so, um, but it never occurred to me that I could just paint horses and, um, later in life, as in my 20s when I began, um, my early 20s, when I was going to art college, uh, I had an encounter with horses that changed everything. And it it reaffirmed the feelings that I had had, that there were connections with horses that were honest and true, and they weren't just about riding them or just about what, um, what people did with them in the world. And ironically, when I started exhibiting my artwork, I went to the horse world because that was the place where horse people were, um, that might buy my work. And I got ensconced in the, uh, sport world for a while because that's, um, how I was introduced. One of my, our dear friends and a patron of mine was into horse racing. So I began going to the back side of the track and learning about all the sports and the the accomplishments of horses in the world. And I, I was drawn up into the, um, or pulled into the celebrity of that and was fascinated by it for a while. But then I, um, the more I was around that, the more I began to feel that there was a, um, a discrepancy between how people felt about horses, the love for horses, and the connection with horses, and why they're with horses, why they're intrigued by them, and then what they do with them and how they, uh, justify or reconcile the fact that, um. ^{1s} The people that were sensitive to to there. You know, who they are is as beings. Um, would just sort of shut that part down or, or talk about it behind closed doors. Um, because they were faced with the, uh, dilemma of what to do with horses and feel that way at the same time. And then there were other people who really didn't believe that horses felt that way. But the people that I, uh, encountered with my art immediately opened up that conversation. Um, and the more that conversation happened about, what am I actually painting and, and, and what horses are to those who resonate with what I paint. Then there was more, um, more of a gap between me wanting to paint sports. Even so, I began, um, shifting into more and more of a where my art started, which was about the flow and about connection and, um, having an experience of of resonating with the horse's beingness and their movements and their spirit in my own body and drawing that. And and then I began to be really honest about how I wanted to, um, come out of the closet, as it were, and, and say, that's that's who horses are, and that's what I want to paint and who I want to connect with in my audience. And the more I began to do that, the more of those kinds of people resonated with me. So I then no longer had to paint the celebrity horses or the sports in order to connect with the people that I wanted to connect with.

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That's interesting. The whole when you come out of the quote unquote, when you come out of the closet, you know, I'm a big fan of Brené Brown. And when she talks about vulnerability and, you know, you always think that if you are. If you are vulnerable and express how you really feel about some things, that everybody will laugh at you. But what you tend to find is. You're not alone. And people will say me too.

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Exactly.

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I was going to ask you about that. You said horses in sport and you mentioned racing. Was that mostly racing? It was racing. I tried, uh, some different venues. Um, even, uh, horse shows, because I got into the very beginning of my career. Uh, my mom and I were in business together. She was a great supporter of mine, thank goodness. And, um, our first introduction to the horse world was through horse Arabian horse shows. Because in those days, this was in the, uh, mid 80s. That's the only horse events and horse expos there were in the country. There weren't these big, you know, main event kinds of things. So the only real, uh, attractive trade shows were at the Arabian Horse shows. And of course, I loved Arabians, and they were they were one of my introductions to this feeling of of that beauty and and that spirit. And, uh, when I saw them at liberty for the first time in my life, um, at the age of 20. So, um, that was my introduction to the horse show world and the celebrity of, you know, how beautiful a horse could be and, and breeding stallions and marketing and all that stuff. And, um, stepping into that trade show world was really a lot of fun. And, um, and then I tried to exhibit my work at, um, you know, different events like showjumping and dressage and polo and, and so each, each event I went to trying to find this audience that would love the horse, um, depending on the amount of the engagement that that particular sport had with the horse, had with the horses, a celebrity, um, versus the person as a celebrity. There was all sorts of mixes of of what that was. And I discovered very quickly that some of the sports, um, didn't matter what I painted.

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That was, um, expressing even if it was that sport, because some people only wanted in that sport to see a certain, a certain type of art, uh, of what, depicting what the, what they loved. And sometimes it wasn't even, um, like, they didn't need to see that in their home, for instance. But with the Arabian horse events, at least I had the feeling that those people really loved the horse. First and foremost, they loved the Arabian horse. And, um, and so. I could paint an Arabian horse in other circumstances or other styles or other expressions, and they would love that too. It didn't have to be their horse, it didn't have to be the sport they were into or whatever. So that was part of what my evolution was.

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Sounds like it's an interesting, um, journey into different horse sports and see.

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How interested in horses that particular sport is. And it's interesting you started out with racing because I think horse racing is a completely false horse sport. And I don't mean.

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The people who involved in racing don't like horses. But the only reason horse racing exists on the level that exists is because you can gamble on it. Right? And all the prize money doesn't come from interesting horses like, say, dressage. Okay. There is no prize money in dressage. But if you want to buy a whole Olympic level horse, you're looking at millions of dollars because there are people interested, right? Or wrongly, you know, uh, interested in the horse itself and the activity it does. And they'll pay money for

that. But if you I always have this thought that if you took gambling out of horse racing, no one would show up. There would be they might no one would show up. They still might be horse racing, the people in the racing industry.

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Well, would certainly would certainly sort them out to see if you're in this because you like racing horses or in this because it makes a lot of money and it just happens to be horse racing. But I've always had this thought, what if you if you made gambling on horse races illegal, would there be any horse racing? Yeah, I mean they might be one down the back pasture, you know, like like if you think about.

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You know, my horse is faster than your horse sort of thing,

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but. Right.

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But but, you know, if you took the money out of almost any other horse sport, people still be doing it.

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Exactly. And, you know, it's probably always irked me, and this is probably part of my stuff. But, you know, I'd be on a plane somewhere and people say, oh, what do you do? I'm a horse trainer. Oh, racehorses. It's

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like, you know, that is not horse training.

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The 1s I in fact, the horses aren't allowed to do anything but, you know, go in one direction and really fast. So and you know and I'm not I'm not a, I'm not a fan of the horse racing industry just because as someone who helps people with their horses solve issues and most of those issues are behavioral issues, and those behavioral issues are mental health issues in horses. 1s There are no mentally well-adjusted horses that come out of horse racing. You know. No, they have

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exactly. They all have to be retrained. 2s To be a.

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Say general horse to you know, to be around and so you know so there's the, the money bit and then the horses that come out of there aren't horses anyway. There are they're a, you know, they've got PTSD basically they're like soldiers coming back from overseas sort of thing. And everybody thinks, oh, horse racing. It's so wonderful. I'm not, you know, I'm not a fan of it. I'm not going to condone it. For me, it's like the the thing about the money, it's just an it's an interesting thought I've always had. Like, if you couldn't gamble on, 1s uh,

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horse racing, would they. Would there actually be any horse racing? And not only the gambling but the the ownership of the horse racing is gambling. I mean, the, you know, those gamblers that for the most part that own the horses are gambling on a larger scale. They just invest or they breed or whatever, and they, they are gambling that that horse will make them money. And if they don't make them money, then they're a liability or they're, you know, too expensive. And then they go the way of not, not a good life. And, um, yeah, I was, I was really once I started listening and asking questions and observing all that, I had the same reaction. I was like, um, you know, there's the the wonderful people who work on the backside, who work with the horses, who love them. But, um, and there's the fans who truly, uh, will just go for that particular horse that they're rooting for, regardless of whether they bet on them. But those are the exceptions. And and, um, I rescued a racehorse off the track, so I know full well the trauma and the rehab and the. Where you can't resolve or help even if the horse is not even ridden. It's just just her. The rest of her life, she was damaged by that. So. Yeah. 3s Interesting. So let's go back to your childhood. Where did you grow

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up? Long beach, California, southern California,

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long beach is like you said. There weren't many horses available. Yeah, right. Yeah. Long beach is more surf orange, isn't it? Yeah.

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No, I was just going to say, actually, it wasn't even that interesting because it had a breakwater, so the beach was totally boring and flat. I didn't have wild waves or beautiful, um, nature there. Really.

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So people from other parts of the world who might not be familiar with California, I think because of TV, everybody thinks California is Baywatch,

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right? Um,

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that's that's that's Southern California. I'm in central California and there's Northern California. Um, but it's almost like 2 or 3 different countries. But LA is yeah. The LA is a different. Uh, kettle of fish and. Yeah, that's that's that's Baywatch. California.

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Yeah. I had a we had a beautiful, um, area where I lived in is called Belmont Shore. So it's kind of a Carmel or a small town within the larger town. So it has a bit more character and more of a local feel of, of, um, the, the town of where the shops are and stuff. Um, so and my, my great aunt had built a beautiful home on the hill in the 30s when she and her husband struck oil. So it was kind of a, uh, beautiful home to grow up in with. My parents and my older siblings were out of the house by then, so, uh. Yeah. So Long Beach was a beautiful area to grow up in, but it was definitely a void of horses.

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So they struck oil in LA

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in Signal Hill. Uh, yeah. Right in that area in the 30s.

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You don't think of California as being oil place, but where we are in Paso Robles, just about 510 miles north of here, there's a lot of oil wells.

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Oh, yeah. It's interesting. There's, uh, one of my favorite movies is called The 13th Floor, and it has scenes that go back into the 30s and that part of the the country. And there was oil rigs everywhere in Beverly Hills. Um, you know, it was, uh, there was oil all over California. Yeah. Is probably there still oil rigs just 20 miles from where I grew up. Even though it was a kind of an upscale area.

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So as a child, what did you want to be?

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I wanted to be a horse. 2s I, uh. That didn't work out so well. So I played horse for a while on my hands and knees until until, uh, you know, I started going to school, and then that was sort of frowned on. So, um, the kids I encountered in school didn't really understand, you know, my interest in animals. So I just, uh, you know, got quiet about that. But the art at least gave me a a bit of a, um, you know, people could admire me for that, but, um, so the art was the other side of that coin. Um, I was good at art. I loved drawing, and, um, I always tell the story that actually, I, I think that probably the moments, uh, because

there's never, you know, just one. But one of the moments when I decided to become an artist was when my parents and I used to go out to eat and, uh, you know, I'd occupy myself with drawing on the paper napkins or the paper, uh, placemats. And, and at one point, one of the waitresses walked up and I, she said, oh, isn't that lovely or whatever? And I and I was so tickled that I, I handed her the drawing and she got so sweet. And she said, oh my gosh, I, I just have to give you something. This is just so sweet of you. So she took me over to the counter and they had a glass case with cookies inside, and she gave me this big Snoopy cookie and I thought, hey, this is a pretty good deal. You know, if I can make somebody happy and get a cookie. 1s So that's pretty much where it started.

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You mentioned a minute ago in about at school the art. 1s I don't want to put words in your mouth because these weren't the exact words you said, but it was basically the the art. 2s Drew people's attention to me or I got, you know, it was basically you were saying you got kind of positive feedback from that. And I'm always fascinated by.

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What people are drawn to do and especially why they're drawn to to do it. And. Do you feel there was an element of of that in your, um.

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Attraction to to art. And do you think there's an element of that to what led you further into it?

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Yeah. As I said that, I, I kind of remarked on that because I hadn't really, um, said that before in that way, though, I, I wrote a little story once where I said, you know. Where the antagonist in the character like a children's book, *The Girl Who Drew Horses*. Um, the antagonist or the person who was, you know, the friction in the story was I made up as a character, but it must have been based on someone, um, that that someone, you know, that she was made fun of as a child and that this girl came over and saw her drawing of horses and and said, that's pretty. And it was somebody that, you know, normally would have never noticed me or her, the character, it was, you know, so it was like the the kids that that did know that I did art, you know, on the edges of my notebook or, or if I entered a contest at school or something. Not everybody knew I was an artist, but but I would say for the most part that people, uh, that I encountered that I was intimidated by, I was I was shy, not in the popular crowd. These are we're talking about big schools. These are schools of, you know, thousands of students. So, um, it was it was not a very small, friendly environment. And, um, and, and also, I think the teachers were very supportive. I found a lot of resources from early on, and especially in my, um, junior high years, I had a one particular art teacher that just took me under his wing and was very encouraging and supportive and, uh, suggested and enrolled me in an accelerated art program. So I got to be sort of taken out of that environment and, and bused half a day to a specialty school that only taught art. I mean, that was just that was so thrilling to be a to be accepted and and to win that scholarship and be to be removed from the world, that was not as much fun. And to go do art half a day was, was, you know, totally thrilling. So I think I had both the experience of someone like the waitress supporting me right from the get go, like you're you're doing something magical. I'd like to, you know, reward you for that. And then other people who I was intimidated or or, uh, scared about how to be in that world with them, that I, that world was also made easier and more friendly because I was able to do something different than they could, I guess. Or that they knew they could. 1s So it sounds like it was, you know, it sounds like it was a passion, but it was also a passion with a.

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Friends with benefits. It was, you know, it was it was you had you had some added benefits from it as well.

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Yeah. And I and I always have said that I was so fortunate that my parents never, never, uh, they always celebrated my talents and and they, um, didn't say, you know, well, you can't draw, you know, or that's not a way to make it in the world or any of that. Um, like a lot of artists have, have expressed that the angst about not being able to do their craft. And I was always thankfully supported in that and, and with my teachers. So it it was a it was a no guess as to what I would become. Um, but but it was in me from the time I could hold a crayon and I, uh, thankfully, my mom has saved those early childhood drawings, and and horses were the main theme. In fact, um, I, I feel very strongly that, um, that the kinship between horses and I was, you know, long before birth and, and, um, my first horse, my racehorse that I rescued, Dharma was a bay mare and my early drawings that were recognizable, that weren't just, you know, green horses with pink manes were bay horses. And so I've always been fascinated by that as well. 2s I was artistic as a kid, loved to draw. I was always drawing and, um, always drawing horses too. So, you know, my walls and my bedroom were covered with pictures of horses or pictures of horses that I'd drawn. And I, you know, I took some art classes, like after school and a local, what you might call a community college here in America. Um.

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But I almost didn't want to learn to draw. I only want to draw horses, you know? I didn't want to do the other stuff,

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right? Me too. 2s Yeah. You obviously teacher.

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You obviously stuck with it enough to actually do the to do the other stuff. Yeah, that was my question was so when you went to college, you went to a college for art?

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Yeah. My, my mom and I moved up to the northwest and uh, when I was 15 and finished, I finished high school up here and continued doing art. And then, um, there was a wonderful, uh, small, very, very small, like ten students. Art college that opened up just half an hour from me. So, uh, that was an easy and friendly introduction to the art without a lot of pressure of college and and not even necessarily a bachelor's degree pursuit. It was an associate of Art degree. So it was just a two year college. So it was a lot just more free freedom of expression, not a lot of peer pressure. Some of the students were older, like when I had been in high school and got accepted into the accelerated art program. Most of the students were older than I. So that was that was and it just took it out of the peer pressure side of it, like everybody was was supportive. And same with the college. 2s And then I, uh, when I started, um, my passion of painting horses because of the horse encounter, uh, and I, I just realized that I didn't want to just be an illustrator of somebody else's projects working for hire, that I wanted to paint my own concepts

and my own feelings. Um, then I thought that I should get a degree, because that's what you do. And so I went to a real, you know, official art college in Seattle. Uh, and that was a shock because it was back in not only the academia but the, um, a whole different approach to art, which was avant garde and, um, like the the more abstract and the more it challenged people's reality, the more it was called art. And, and I had been painting more life drawing and, and figures and, um, seeking ways to communicate with the audience through advertising and, and, you know, illustration. And then when you go, I went into the fine art school that was more about let's shock somebody into thinking this is beautiful or not even beautiful, thinking, this is art, I should say. So, um, their definition of art was completely different than mine. And, um, and I realized very quickly that that wasn't I wasn't going to progress much there. And so I never got my, my bachelor's degree, but it doesn't matter. I followed my passion. ^{2s} Yeah, I'm glad you mentioned that, because I was kind of that was going to be one of my questions was how was it going to to ask, you know, because I brought up the fact that I went to art classes, but I only wanted to draw horses. And how was it going to go to art school? And.

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You know, there's probably such a broad range of things that have you do there. Um, so he didn't last there?

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No, I didn't I chose not to finish. And and I chose because of my mom's support and also the horse equation. Um, I, I realized that I didn't need a degree to do what I loved. And so I started pursuing the horse events and selling my work directly to the public right from the beginning. Uh, and the what? I had, uh, been. So gifted to receive was in my early education. There's a book by a woman named Betty Edwards. She wrote a book called drawing on the Right Side of the brain, and it's quite famous now. She was it was her master's thesis to, uh, teach everyone to draw, and that to prove that it's not, uh, you know, just a skill that people are born with it. It is a number of things. And part of it is using the right side of your brain. And that was a great introduction to, um, how to express, uh, drawings in such a way that wasn't only based on, um, the photorealism or, or perspective or, you know, the things that I was taught in school. Um, and so that that was a really great introduction to the work that I do as well, because one of the one of the techniques is called gesture drawing. And it's drawing a model, but instead of a pose they're holding for half an hour or something, and you're drawing in great detail every part of their anatomy, you know, anatomically based drawing. Um, it was gestures, as in, you know, them just doing something with their hand and you trying to draw that before, you know, uh, which, of course, it's in your mind's eye because you can't you can't record it, but the feeling of it. And that was the key to what ended up being my, um, my epiphany about drawing horses. ^{1s} So there's been a couple of times you've mentioned. ^{1s} An encounter with horses that changed everything. Mhm. You've

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alluded to that. What was what was that encounter. Yeah.

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So I was um I was in my first year of art college. I'd been practicing lots of techniques and mediums. Um, and we had a spring break and we went to visit dear friends who lived in Arroyo Grande, and they had Arabian horses. And I had met their horses over the years. In fact, the first time I ever tried to ride one of their horses, with their permission, um, she took off with me and I nearly fell off. So, um, riding wasn't always my cup of tea, but I loved being on the ground with them. Um, but, uh, so I had to fill my sketchbook for homework for class, and I was visiting the horses in the barn, loving being with them, but

they were snapping and, you know, standing in the stalls. And I was like, you know, what do I draw here? And, um, how do I, you know, it's not very interesting to draw anatomy, right? So, uh, I, our friend Jessica just happened to come along, and she was an artist, too, so that was intriguing later in the story. Um, but anyway, she she said, you know, I see what you're trying to do. Would you like me to let them out into the arena? And if I back up a little bit, uh, to my early childhood, taking riding lessons at the boarding stable, um, the magical times that I ended up spending with those horses was when everyone went home and they stopped riding and training the horses, and I just got to hang out with them. And at an empty, um, stable when everyone gone to lunch. And, um, and so my only experience of being with horses and humans was that horses were trained or done something with and then put back in a box. So there was no liberty, there was no even lunging much or a round pen or anything. There was no horse without a lead. And so I'd never actually seen a horse at liberty. And so, uh, she said, would you? Jessica said, would you like me to let the horses out into the arena? And I didn't even really know what that meant. I was 20 years old by this time. And, um, you know, this was the days before the internet and a lot of television about horses running. So I, uh. ^{1s} I probably had seen it. Maybe, but I'd never felt it, I should say, because I'd never been in the presence of forces that did this. And she let the horses out, and I had my sketchbook already. I'm going to draw these horses. And they started running around with their tails up in the air and snorting and tossing their heads. And I'm standing in the middle of the arena. And fortunately I didn't feel unsafe, but I was. I was caught up in this emotion and this beauty that they were expressing. And all I could think of was, how am I going to draw that? And I just, you know, I just got past that resistance and I kept drawing, even though I had no idea what I was going to do. And a few pages went by and I, I just started. ^{1s} Realizing that I couldn't capture the impression of them in my mind's eye long enough to know what they were doing. I couldn't paint them anatomically, so I just. ^{1s} Grounded myself. I guess I didn't know how to do that at the time, but I became centered in myself and I. I wanted to grasp the feeling like reaching out and and taking that feeling of what they were doing in mid-air, usually, and draw it on paper somehow. And this gesture drawing technique that I had learned of the of the models holding these quick poses was like, uh, exponentially shortened because the quick pose was, you know, a split second. But I started sketching these horses and, and I call them spirit sketches, these line drawings of horses in motion and or lapping and weaving together. And and you can't always tell what's a leg and you know, but the faces and the tails and the and the movement was captured and I, I was. I was astonished and excited. And after they calmed down, I, uh, went to talk with Gasca. I showed the drawings to her because she was an artist. I you know, I wanted to see what she thought. And she said, my, these are remarkable. And I said, really? They're just scribbles. And she said, no, they're, they're really quite beautiful. And, and she pointed at this one drawing and she said, is that Hala, the name of her horse? And I said she had three horses. And I said, how can you tell? It's just a bunch of lines. And she said, it just feels like him. And that was just an awakening of, there's something here. And when I went back to school, I began thinking, I want to draw this way. This is not illustration. This is not, um, you know, conveying something in a realistic way, though I do a lot of realistic work now. But that was the, um, Genesis of the feeling connection and the rapport, uh, that I was able to ^{1s} put into something visionary or visible on paper and, and then having her confirm and other people later confirm. I feel that when I look at that, then that was something really intriguing to me. So I discovered, um, my instructor had pastel, uh, which is like, uh, it's a dry medium, like a chalk, sort of. And, uh, I wanted to capture something the same spontaneity, um, that didn't involve mixing paints and getting into that kind of, uh, complexity. I just wanted to draw, and I never used pastel. And when I, when I began picking them up and drawing, they came out in that same spontaneous flow. So that was the introduction to pastel, and I've never worked with any medium since.

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Do you have? On your website? Do you have some of those? What do you call them? Spirit drawings. Spirit sketches? Yeah. Do you have some of them

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on there? I do okay

U2

37:53

I have, I have seen them and they. Yes, I have seen them and the, the. 1s They're almost like, um. 2s You know. There. They're moving there. 1s There's there's. It's not a steel thing. You can kind of feel the energy in

U1

38:13

them. Mhm. 2s Yeah. That was, that was uh and I still create from that place whether I'm doing the realism or not, the movement is, is and the life is always a part of my work. It's, it's not a static thing at all. Yeah. 1s Mhm.

U2

38:35

So you mentioned uh gasket in that and when you first mentioned her you said like there was an aside, something about something else gasket did or told you or something or other. Do you know what that is.

U1

38:47

Yeah. That was the, uh, the moment where she, uh. Well, first that she had the impulse to let the horses out, which was which was lovely. And then the fact that she was an artist and she recognized that, um, that that her horse was this one drawing, and she supported my, my, my initial launch into this unknown, um, uh, expression of my art. And, um, it meant a lot to me because she was an artist and, uh, and she knew her horses. And for her to say, that's my horse in this wildly abstract, horse like drawing was very, uh, very much a part of my feeling that I was doing something new in, in myself and and maybe to, to others because she was saying in her experience as an artist and in her probably her knowledge of art history or whatever, that this was unique and, uh, that that gave me a lot of faith and in keeping going with it.

U2

39:54

Mhm. You know I also thought it was really interesting and that is you'd been interested in horses since you were a small child and you're 20 years old and you realize you thought that horses either lived in a stall or had a human on their back, and those were the two options available to horses.

U1

40:08

Yeah, I it's funny, when I look back, I think, well, I must have seen movies or, or this or that, but as I said, the story today, I realized maybe it was because I'd never actually experienced it. Um, being in the presence of horses who were at liberty, uh, you know, or been, you know, near a herd of wild horses or, you know, that kind of thing. There's something about that energy when you're with it. Um, when, when you first experience it, it's it's like a light bulb goes off, you know, there's something there. That's when they're able to express themselves that way. They're completely natural way that that just drew me like a magnet and and made me want to figure that out. What is that? That's what I had wanted to be as a child. Whenever I played horse and galloped around on my hands and knees, I was always again. The sport theme was like I wanted to be a wild horse. I didn't want to be a dressage horse. And when you talk to kids, a lot of times they'll if they do play horse, they're usually playing a show horse or they're playing riding a horse, like like a hobby horse or they are the rider. There's only a few kids. Even in all my career

that I've, I've shared this story that there's a few adults that will say, yeah, I was the horse too. And it's almost like a secret code word, like, you know. Oh, yeah, I get that. You know,

U2

41:44

you got to come up with a secret handshake for that, right?

U1

41:48

Secret hoof shake.

U2

41:50

Secret hoof shake. You mentioned earlier that you moved up to the northwest, and I just wanted to point out for viewers who might not know, listeners, who might not know what that means, that's the that's up Washington state, and it's the top northwest corner of the United States. And if you haven't been there, it's. Beautiful. It's, um. Beautiful trees and forests and quite a wet place. Though it rains a lot,

U1

42:13

it rains a lot, which is why it's so beautiful. 2s But you have weather here, right in Southern California. You know, weather is is a. It's not very prevalent. It's always sunshine, you know. So it was it's nice to have weather and storms and clouds and waves and and uh, nature. 1s Great. Yeah. You,

U2

42:38

you you get to experience, um. 4s A broader range of. Of, um, a broader range of, of whether, you know, and it's interesting, I just on Facebook today, it popped up. So I've been doing ice baths for a number of years now, and I forgot, I didn't realize how long I've been doing it, but today a. 1s Uh, just before I got on here with you, I think popped up on Facebook as a memory from five years ago. And I was in Utah, and I went up to visit a horseman named West Taylor. And I didn't know anything about West Taylor, but I just had this, like, intuition. Like, I need to go talk to this guy, and, uh. 3s I had just started doing these ice baths and I was telling him about him and he said, oh, there's a there's an ice covered lake just down the road from here. So I said, tomorrow we should go down there in an ice bath. So the next day we went down there and stripped down their underwear and had to actually stomp, uh, holes in the ice on this. So the whole lakes frozen stomp, uh, holes in the ice on this lake and, and and get in and do a two minute cold plunge. But the thing about, like, say, the ice baths or if you're going to get in a sauna or whatever is, is you're exposing your body to a much broader range of temperatures than we have in our air conditioned houses and our heated houses, which is how we're supposed to live. And, you know, Southern California is not you know, it doesn't have a very broad range of, of temperatures and, and weather patterns. Whereas, yeah, you go to other places and you get to experience that a bit more. And, you know, Washington State is so cool because. 3s I don't know. It feels like you're always out in nature, wherever you are there.

U1

44:33

Yeah. Even when you're in the city. Yeah. And we don't, uh, we don't live in the city, but, uh, we have a beautiful, uh. And I grew up coming up to the Hood Canal, which is, uh, about an hour and a half from here, which is its own waterway. And, um, uh, not as many population. Uh, so it's it's much more wild,

uh, than where I live. But, um, you know, to, to be surrounded by, to go to a beach and shuck oysters and swim with, you know, uh. ^{2s} The the otters. And, you know, it was just it was such an incredible experience coming from a California desert beach of no life whatsoever, not even a seashell. And then to come to, you know, the wilds of the northwest was very inspiring.

U2

45:30

Speaking of cold plunges, if you're going swimming in in at the beach in Washington, you're having a cold plunge.

U1

45:36

Yeah. We waited until the in the summertime when the tide would go out. It would it would heat up the beach and you had about two hours, an hour or two before the water got too cold to swim in. And so we, we would swim in the shallows when the it would heat up the water. It was really fun.

U2

45:54

Oh, that was on those two days when the sun comes

U1

45:55

out right in the summertime, it's it's more sunny.

U2

46:00

I, I judged a rainy show up there years ago and I was in the middle of

U1

46:04

summer. Literally a raining show, right? Yeah,

U2

46:08

it wasn't raining, but it was overcast and cloudy and cool. And then the sun came out for about two hours and I said something about it, and they said, oh, that was that was summer,

U1

46:17

right? ^{1s} Well, it's it's actually a conspiracy. They, you know, the the weather report on the news always says it's raining here. And we look out and we go, oh no, you know, but we don't want people knowing how beautiful it is. So

U2

46:32

why do you want to keep it a secret? You don't want all the Californians moving there. You want them to keep moving to

U1

46:36

Texas. And of course, I was one. 4s So in the, uh, in the intro, I mentioned that you had done the artwork.

U2

46:51

For Linda. Coronavirus. 1s Caddick. Can you tell us about how you met Lindor and how all that came about?

U1

47:01

Yeah, that was a, uh, a very fortuitous event, um, series of events. So, as I'm sure you feel, horses are usually the catalyst to something magical in our lives. And, um, and in my case, my mare Dama, the ex racehorse who was so troubled, um, my quest to help her heal.

U2

47:25

Donna, when you got her, it was. 2s Yeah. Dama. Yeah. And actually, I thought it was misspelled for a long time because it was spelled dama. And then I just recently looked up for the millionth time the word dama and found that that is one of the spellings. So whoever named her that, uh, decided that's how they spelled it. But anyway, um, it means the chosen path among amazing a million other things. But as opposed to karma, uh, it means, uh, you know, what you do with with the life energy you're given and and how to be in flow and, and, uh, in synchronicity with it. So she was that for me. And and by way of trying to resolve, uh, what needed to be healed. And what I didn't know at the time was was not only what needed to be healed for her, but what needed to be healed within me. And, uh, so I, um. In her behaviors and my novice, um, skills as a horsewoman, which were, you know, very minimal. Uh, I was trying to figure out how to even just lead her in a straight line or walker without her going into a fight or flight. And, um, so I that was my introduction to animal communicators, and I had always believed in such things, but to actually speak with someone who could speak with Dharma at a distance was really remarkable. And that that first communicator I work with, her name was Sharon Callahan. This was back in 97, so it was still kind of a new thing in the in the popular culture. Um, I had a session with her, and one of the things she said was, you know, uh, have has have you thought about the fact, she says, I often find with my clients that their animals are also exhibiting something within them, that that is not just their behavior, but they're they're tapping into something that you need to resolve. And that was totally a new concept for me. And not that long after that, um, because I was going through some challenges in my life at that time. Um, so it, it made sense in looking back. And so anyway, uh, Linda, um, had been interviewing Sharon Callahan, and she mentioned this story about this young woman who had a horse that, you know, that she finds that, you know, horses, um, can reflect their people's, um, issues that need to be healed. And so Linda called me, she was riding the Dao of Equus, and, uh, she interviewed me for that book with my mare Dharma. And I was, of course, thrilled and excited. Yeah, 2s yeah. First edition. And, um, and just so excited to hear about her work and what she was doing and, and in particular the. The, um, you know, shamanic and and emotional experiences that she was having in addition to her amazing skills and knowledge. And, um, and so she wrote about Dharma in that first book, and we connected over the years. And then a few years later, uh, I was my dear friend Connie, who I just had met. Um, you know, it's like how things happen. Sometimes the most beautiful things happen because someone else, you know, connects you with someone. And Connie was one of those people is one of those people. And, uh, she mentioned after I had just met her and she was raving about my art, she said, oh, did you know Linda Callahan was teaching a workshop at my friend Sandra Wallace in Canada? And

I said, no, oh my gosh, I have a same weekend. I would have loved to have attended that, but I have signed up with one of Linda's approved instructors for a workshop that same weekend. I've already paid for it, darn. You know. And so Connie took that to mean I wish I could come. She took that to mean I want to come. And so she put my name on the waiting list without me actually knowing about it. And, um, and also, unbeknownst to me, there were five people ahead of me on the waiting list, so the chances of actually going were pretty slim anyway. And about a month later, I got a phone call. It says, you're you're able to come to the workshop. And I said, what workshop? Because I didn't actually even know I was signed up. So that was an all five people that, you know, somebody had cancelled and all five people couldn't make it. And thank goodness I did, because that was where it all began. That was the first time I had I had worked with one of Linda's approved instructors. Um, and that was an epiphany. And of itself, that was an, um, an experience beyond words that I couldn't put words to because it was so emotional to be, even though I had experienced horses in these, in these experiences of being with them and seeing their beauty, I had never, *ls* uh, been in their presence in that kind of therapeutic, uh, way. And I was shocked and astonished at the emotion that came about from that, um, that was tapping into something way deeper than I even was conscious of. And so when I met Linda, I was primed to be exploring that. What is that and how do I paint that and how do I express that? Um, not only from the horse equation and, and connection, but the, the human heart and, um, through Linda's work and the body scan and what she teaches of being with the presence of horses and resonating with them and asking a, you know, entering a dialogue with, with the energy field of the horse and being in their presence in that way, just opened up an entirely new awareness of.

U1

53:40

Of how. My art had the same effect on people. I began thinking about, you know, when people stand in front of my paintings, this is the experience they're having. It's almost like they're standing in front of a living horse. And so I began thinking about that and, and some other experiences that that workshop. And shortly thereafter, I began talking a little with Linda about my curiosity. And she had been aware of my art and actually collected it, I think, when we first met. Um, and I began having experiences with that. And, and then she invited me to, um, exhibit my art and be part of her slide presentation that she was doing. And in town while she was in the Seattle area. And long story short, um, we, uh, met at a bookstore, East-West bookstore, metaphysical bookstore. And I, I just had this feeling like there was something on the horizon. There's something here about my work. And Linda and, um, I talked with the bookstore owner, who at first was actually kind of, um, um, not all that friendly. And then she she softened the more she was around us in my art, and, and she said, you know, maybe you should do a card deck. And, and I'm like, oh. And so she, uh, she introduced me to, uh, a card deck by Brian Froud, who's a fairy artist who I just adore. And I bought the deck. And just that whole night, I'm like, there's something about this. And, uh, the next day, I was picking Linda up at her hotel. We were going to travel to this next venue, and she got in the car and I said, I just have to say something. I feel like there's something here about my art and your work and and your words and your skills and communication and, and what my art does with people and how they feel about it and when they're in the presence of the horse in my art. And so I just have this idea, what would you like to do? A card deck together. And, and she said, wow, that that actually really could be a key to something that I've been working with myself and we, you know, got all excited about the idea. And so, uh, Linda said and I showed her the deck with Brian Freud's work, and she said, let's draw a card, see what you know, what what the deck says. And it's a deck of very beings. So there I didn't know that there were any horses in there, but there actually was only one, uh, in the sense of this character of the ferry was named. And Linda's work is called upon request, after the goddess of the horse, Epona, and the only card in the deck that had anything to do with horses we picked and it was called Epona, Wild Daughter and wow, we just looked at each other and when we just like, okay, we're in for a ride. And and the card was very relevant to the theme that we were exploring. And, um, she went home and called her publisher and said, would you be interested in this project? And two weeks later we had a contract. So it was a beginning, a very happy relationship and friendship with Linda and and an amazing collaboration which, which, uh. *ls* Just led me down the path of, um, my own healing, you know, healing with horses for myself and for other people, which was really what I've always sought anyway, is when I began finding that people had these emotional reactions to my work, I knew there was more that could be explored there. And so this was was just the the perfect key to to beginning that journey.

U2

57:33

So with this. So the card deck is called, uh, way of the horse equine archetypes for self-discovery and. 2s The artwork for that. Did you were they was that art that you already had drawn in? You decided to put them on the card or did you draw those for. Specifically for that card deck.

U1

57:58

It was a mix. Um, primarily it was our I had already done and and Linda looked through my portfolio of probably at that time, there's about 300 paintings that she chose and we chose together, uh, through interactions with, um, some of her instructors and clients. We began, um. Sort of doing test runs of of which pieces brought, brought out which emotions and which elicited certain feelings. And Linda was really, uh, interested in taking her work that that she'd been doing with clients, uh, in the presence of horses, uh, and, and putting it in a way that people could access that wasn't, you know, them physically at a workshop. And so she had a, um, the emotional message chart and things that, um, Carla MacLaren, uh, she had adopted from her and, um, other of her principles that she wanted to express. So she looked at my portfolio and said this, this would be a perfect card for this. And then as we engaged in all that, we began realizing that the stories of her horses and mine, uh, were also part of that journey. And, and and what was equally important or more so. So I volunteered to say, you know, why don't I do some other paintings for the deck that are about that concept? Um, so of her horses, um, one of whom was not she who she called the master of sadness and, um, uh, her horse, Merlin and Spirit, that was her stallion that she rescued and his, um, his twin son that was, uh, premature and also spirit and his brother, the twins that his brother had passed at birth. And the archetype and the beautiful story of that, um, of the healing and the gift of spirit's birth. And and then I painted also my mare Dama um, in Damas reflection. Um, it was a it's an image of her I, which was based on a photograph that I had taken in her stall when I was photographing her. And for some uncanny reason, which no one, including the photographers I've spoken with, can explain, um, there was a reflection in her eye of herself. 1s And so she was her. In her eye is an image of her standing in her own stall. And and and none of us can explain it. So that's so

U2

60:40

the paintings in the card deck?

U1

60:42

Yes.

U2

60:45

The picture itself. Is it on your website or

U1

60:48

anything? Uh, the photograph isn't, but I can send it to. Yeah, I would love to see

U2

60:54

that. Yeah, I

U1

60:55

would love to see that. I mean, and this was back in the days of, you know, film and cameras and the fact that I even I didn't see it when I photographed it, I was taking a picture of her. I but when I got it developed, which was the magic of that, that type of development was, you were often surprised what you got. Uh, when I got the film developed, I, you know, and in the picture her, I was, you know, this, this big, but I my, I caught it and I, I was like, what is that? And I blew it up and I was like, oh my gosh, how did ^{2s} you know? And so it should have been you in a camera, right. Exactly. Exactly. And it's appropriately the card for self-reflection. In in the deck. So it's, um, it's very it's just that mirror of infinity of what is relationship? What is what is who? Who am I? Who are you? Who are we together? That kind of thing. And, um, and then, uh, the other concept that was I depicted, which was a, a challenge, but a joy was the mare headed goddess, which is, um, an archetypal, um, a goddess that was, um, in the early times of our history who was sort of shunned after, uh, you know, was was overshadowed by the male dominated culture and, um, but was a goddess and literally had a, there's been at that time there was very little written about her, but, um, she's a form, a hippo morphic form of the goddess Demeter. Um, and so she's a woman's figure with a, with a horse head. And, uh, so I depicted that as well, which was a lovely, a lovely, complex challenge of how to anatomically blend those two together in a, in a realistic way.

U2

62:51

I'm just I'm just. Wow.

U1

62:53

Um,

U2

62:55

during that, you you mentioned you were in a metaphysical bookshop, and the, um, the owner of the bookshop didn't seem that friendly and then seemed to warm up to you. What do you think that was?

U1

63:10

It's again, the art paved the way for something to happen between us. That was, um, that opened her heart. And I think it was, uh, you know, in her case, we didn't. We never got to have a conversation about why, but. Or whether she had anything to do with horses or any interest in horses. But my impression was that when we came in, you know, she was just being her business self, and she was setting us up with, with the lecture that Linda was going to do. Um. But, uh, and for whatever reason, she was busy with her, with her, um, organizing. But I felt after the reading that, um, that she didn't want to let me go without having some kind of conversation. And I can't remember now what that conversation was, but it it was something like, you know, I felt like the horse, like Linda's lecture had opened her up, and the lecture included art and not just my art, but examples of art and and the horse throughout history. So I, I had the feeling that she came into the conversation with the idea of this was just another author, just another whatever, and that, um, that the event itself tapped into something within her that had to do with the horse. And I think that they're the horse is that way. Um, even people who don't think that they are connected with horses or have any interest in horses will. Will have something shift in them, uh, even in the idea of horses, but especially if they have any other fuel for that beautiful fire to ignite it. It it lights up something in them. ^{3s} Yeah. The idea I was getting or the thing I was thinking about, was that

U2

65:08

she was probably thinking this talk about horses doesn't really belong

U1

65:13

in a metaphysical. In a metaphysical, right? It's what I yeah, you know what I mean? And I and I don't know if that's how you see it, but it's like she warmed up to you guys because she realized, oh, this does belong here. Which brings me to. So Linda came to our she was a guest on the podcast, and she came to our podcast summit last year, and I was probably I was a bit, let's say, intimidated by Linda. Not that she's an intimidating person. This is this is my problem. But I was thinking she was somebody, you know, and where nobody is and.

U2

65:50

When she first got there. 2s When I first met her, she was lovely and everything, but I just felt like there was a there was a little bit of a wall between us. 1s And the story I was telling myself is that, you know, we weren't worthy of Linda, you know what I mean? And then that wall seemed to come down and and this is just the story I'm telling myself. I'd have to really ask Linda what she thought, but. 3s I think. 1s I don't know if you've ever read any reviews of The Death of Equus. You go on Amazon, read the reviews of Death of Equus. There's some haters out there. 1s Who aren't kind of ready to hear that sort of thing. So so I'm, I'm sure Linda has, in the general horse community, come up against some people who. Have some opinions, maybe negative opinions, whatever. And. The story I'm telling myself, whether it was true or not is I think Linda was thinking she was showing up to a bunch of horse people, so she was a little bit reserved about being her full Linda. And by the second day, she was full Linda. And it was beautiful. She was amazing. But I just felt like she's.

U1

67:16

She led us all in initially, but she, you know, I just felt like she was kind of a little bit reserved, almost probably like this bookshop owner. Yeah. You know what I mean? Yeah. And it just it just kind of reminded me of that. But it was so cool, like the I think the. So the podcast summits over three days, the first night we have a meet and greet. So we're having it here in Paso Robles this year. But the last two years it's been in San Antonio and it's in this old it's in this hotel that's in downtown San Antonio. That was an old bank built before the crash of Wall Street in the 20s. So it's it's elaborate, it's beautiful. And on the second floor is this big, uh, breakfast dining sort of area. And so we have a meet the night before we have a meet and greet. So all the people who were coming to present, they're there, but all the people who come to listen, they're there. And so you get to meet your favorite whoever, you know. And, um, but that space is available.

U2

68:12

After the after the summit each day as well. And so lots of people meet there and gather around or whatever. And so it was a dinner one night and someone came in and they said, oh, you should see what's happening on the second floor. I'm like, what? She said, Linda Cohen has got a group of people around like, so, you know, Linda is a big deal. And she's been at the summit all day. She could be going to dinner, going up to a room, whatever. No, she's sitting around. She's got a table full of people and she's reading the cards

U1

68:40

for people. And like, people are crying and like, it's a it's a

U2

68:46

full on. And it's like, wow, that is so cool.

U1

68:49

So it is so special.

U2

68:51

You know, she was spending her time. She could have been doing something else. But no, she was there on the second floor with people reading it, going through this deck of cards. And it was very emotional apparently

U1

69:00

so. And it's it was super cool. It makes me feel like that's so beautiful because it's like at this horse conference about horses and consciousness and whatever you talk about there, uh, that the horses got to, you know, get their hoof in the door and, and, uh, the art allows them to be present and that the synchronicity of picking the cards. And so there's this beautiful conversation that can happen that's totally different than conversation. You know, it's it's that feeling based reality that, uh, that can happen is so magical.

U2

69:36

Yeah, and I can't remember the full details, but I think there was someone who, like, had a specific question. Right? Not for Linda. Yeah. For the for the universe sort of thing. And they were they were having. I don't know, I seem to remember there was a mother and a daughter and it had something to do with a mother and a daughter. I forget exactly what it was, but the story I heard was it was a very powerful. And it was so cool having Linda, you know, just offer her time.

U1

70:01

That's so wonderful

U2

70:03

to. To do that. So after you guys did the card deck, um. Did that. That open new doors for you and your art.

U1

70:18

Yeah. Um, so I often feel like it, you know, it led me to my human herd. Um, it it. It paved the way even more than I had up to that point where I no longer had to justify or, uh, define as much of, um, who my audience were that this this was my people and Linda's work. ^{1s} Attracted them for the various ways in which her work is in the world. And therefore I just had that same access to that conversation. And I had been studying with Linda myself, and then we began teaching some workshops together, um, where we, we taught horses mews and, um, I began working with students, uh, her students, but in my own way, with her, um, in ways of putting their own marks on paper, of defining what they were feeling from the horses and, and giving them some tools from an artistic standpoint of how to tap into those non-verbal emotions that can't always be even journaled. They're just deeper than words. And, um, so that was really it's been an amazing journey and has led me to where I am now doing another card deck with my collaborator Sandra Wallen, who is the woman who I met at that same, um, milestone event of meeting Linda. I also met Sandra. She was hosting the workshop and facilitating it. Um, and now we've written a book together, the Council of Horses Oracle, that's coming out this fall. So, um, that is sort of the next stage of this beautiful journey of, um, expressing this horse consciousness in art and writing in ways that people can tap into in that synchronistic way that you're describing, of asking questions of these amazing beings that seem to have a connection with humanity, um, and, and are here to, to help us in these amazing ways. And so it's, it's definitely set me on the path of what I came here to do. And, and when I look back and I think about that, you know, because even preparing for your show, I, you know, I've done some journaling and thinking about how did this all happen because I'm always curious myself. And and it was in me in my early childhood that the horse was this vehicle for me. Um, but also then my my horse. Became the vehicle because she connected me with Linda and and her the need to help her and other horses who I believed needed humanity to become aware of them and see them differently and treat them better. Um, and their sentience just all has gone hand in hand. There's no way to separate any of it. But, uh, and then the card deck feeding back into my own experiences, my own healing experiences, picking the cards from way of the horse, uh, that led to epiphanies about her and my connection. My horse, Dharma and I. It just it's it's this beautiful spiral that that just keeps unfolding. And then meeting other people who have the same experience with their horses and, and, you know, and then my portraits of their horses that lead them to their self-awareness. It's just it's such a beautiful experience. And it's all the horse. It's all. ^{1s} The magic.

U2

74:12

Mhm. Um, can you tell us more about the book you're doing with Sandra?

U1

74:15

Yeah. It's uh it's we've been working on it for several years and, uh, we, we found this amazing publisher in her traditions, Baron Company in Vermont. And, uh, we're just releasing it. It's actually, I just got the news. It'll be literally printed in about a week. So, um, it's it's a guidebook with, uh, for transformation and self-awareness, and it's different than the way of the horse. And and with Linda's blessing, thank goodness, because, um, she's also. Sandra is one of Linda's approved instructors and was one of her earliest, uh, um, classes and and instructors, um, when she was writing the book was probably. So, um, it all comes full circle for Sandra as well. And, and she and I started working together and began teaching workshops together. Um, and, uh, she lives nearby in Canada. So we were able to connect in many ways and, um, and continue the theme of, uh, we call them Drawn to Horses. So the, the idea of doing art and horses as and Sanders and art therapists. So she has her beautiful skills doing that kind of work. And she's an equine assisted, uh, therapist and teacher. And so it was a beautiful collaboration. And, um, this time around, it's different than the way of the horse, I would say, because, uh, we have taken. ^{1s} The approach that the horses are speaking in the first person to the reader from their consciousness. And it's it's I would say it's more of a, um, Linda explores such complexity of the, um, relational and psychological and, um, scientific exploration of the horse and, and the spirituality is woven throughout. Um, I would say that our deck is more, uh, comes from the spirit first and foremost. And, um, and, and through the emotions. So it's speaking from the first person of the horse to the reader about, um, uh, how we can get closer to the natural world and, and, um, not be so focused on the complexities of being a human, um, find ways of, of

dealing with those complexities, but from a more emotionally wise and spiritually guided place. And, um, so this deck in comparison was also interesting because it was, I would say, well, Sandra did a couple of the paintings in the deck as well, because she's got some beautiful skills and, um, uh, the rest of the deck, I would say about about 70% of it is unique new art created for the deck. And one of our other fascinations was wanting to depict the archetypal mythical horses that are throughout many, many cultures that, um, were only touched upon in way of the horse. Uh, way of the horse, uh featured Pegasus and Chiron, the wounded healer. Um, and this deck focuses on even more of the mythical horses like the unicorn, the kelpie, uh, llama, which is the the Chinese dragon horse, um, and some other beautiful, um, archetype types and, um, some that we encountered in our meditations and our, our exploration of how to express these concepts, and one of which we call the mythic horse, who, when we both meditated with this being. It was a we both had similar, um, encounters and visions that were unmistakably linked to the same image, which was this the concept of a the horse being as a, um, 1s uh, a group consciousness, that archetype, uh, we call them the meta archetype of horses and that he's not just, um, some being in the sky somewhere that's, you know, that we're looking up to and intrigued by. He's interacting with the consciousness of humanity. So all the love of horses that we express as, as humans on our in our emotional, spiritual feelings about them and what we write about them and what we speak about them is all sort of in, in the give and take and the flow of his consciousness. So his coat was covered in like, um, characters and pictures and movies that were, were playing and changing and shifting like a movie screen. And we both saw these, like, almost tattoo like images, but they were coming and going like, um, like, uh. 2s What would you say? Like, uh, morphing into him and and so it was the feeling of, of this interaction with the consciousness of horses that it's a living, breathing dialogue with the spirit of the horse. So that's, um, in a nutshell. That's what we're exploring. And we had some difficulty finding a publisher. Um, it's interesting when you approach the, the, the marketing world with something that's horse based. Again, they want to put it in a niche. And, and our responses from the bigger publishers that we approached were always, this is a niche market. It's, you know, um, horse people, horse trainers, horse riders. And we're like the horse is part of our, our culture through, you know, human history. And we tried to express how the horse is the most painted creature in all of history, uh, from the cave paintings through, you know, the Renaissance and, and early Greeks and everything. It's so it's it's it's in us people who are not horse people are fascinated by horses, you know, and you look everywhere. There's on every movie you ever see. There's always a horse statue in somebody's fancy office or, you know, so. Right. We had to convince them that that there was a way that horses could speak to even non horse, uh, aficionados.

U2

81:00

Yeah, well, it's like they're the conduit for the the message. They're not the message.

U1

81:05

Right.

U2

81:08

So you had mentioned that Sandra is an art therapist. Can you tell me you know what or not therapist does.

U1

81:14

Uh. You'd have to ask her, but, um, my impression is, is that they.

U2

I would think that they, um, work with someone either in their own drawings that that they have them do or, um, or in what they see in things. I don't know, I really am not familiar with the, the skill, but what we did in our workshops was help people, um, access, first of all, the permission in their psyche to get beyond. And this was the same with Linda Cohan's work horses. Muse was first, you have to get people beyond the restrictions that says, I can't draw. And, um, and the the judgments that we have about that. And then, um, then it's a matter of, um, them learning that it's not about making something that looks representational or whatever and which, which anyone in the presence of a beautiful horse is going to want to draw, you know, a beautiful horse. But then they get frustrated with what they draw and that it doesn't look like what they want. And so if you approach it from a more spiritual perspective and, and you go from a feeling base, uh, then it gets into, uh, the abstract drawing or the color that you choose or whatever, uh, that you're trying to put into a non-verbal symbol. Um, is, is the what becomes the dialogue. And when it comes from a feeling, feeling based sensation, when you're sort of dialoguing with the horse and asking a question of your feelings that you're having inside you, and they give you a picture which even the even the people that are not used to having that kind of. **1s** Dialogue often almost invariably have in the presence of horses. That's always been the key to me, is that the horses are the catalyst, because somehow they open us up to that potential. And and then the art gives it a way to be expressed. And, um, so that's, that's my take on the idea of art as a therapy. Um, the expression of the art, um, can become a, the, you know, a way of, of expressing those emotions that, um, journaling or, you know, that kind of thing doesn't really tap into. And that's just human nature. You know, I'm always fascinated by the cave paintings. When I first began my spirit sketches, I, um, I think even Gasca maybe had remarked on them that they reminded her of cave paintings. And they do. Yes. Yeah. And I have always been intrigued by the idea that, **1s** um, even in studying, uh, the history of that for, for our Council of Horses Oracle, I was intrigued and fascinated to learn more about what that meant in in the culture of those people and how there's, there's been a lot of study of that's gone beyond the fact that these were, you know, shamanic drawings of painting their prey, you know, because certainly some of those cultures ate horses. Um, but that actually, as further study has gone on, that it was not about hunting. In fact, the creatures that they depicted weren't usually the ones they were hunting. They were ones they revered. And it wasn't a cultural, um, shamanic attraction, you know, trying to find their prey. It was, um, their, their time and again, finding that it was more about the dialogue with nature and what they wanted to emulate and experience. And, um, and that artists in that culture were I was particularly thrilled to, to, to read that they were, uh. **1s** To really look at it from the from the perspective of normally people in those cultures would have had to have been hunter gatherers so they could contribute to the tribe, but that these people were given exalted status so that they could be in these caves and have these experiences and, and draw these, uh, amazing, um, evocative, spiritual. **2s** Are icons that no one else could. They had been given that gift and that they were supported by their tribe in order to do so. They, you know, they were brought food and they were brought, uh, given the time away from their, um, you know, like a shamanic healer. And so that was fascinating to me. And, and the fact that people the world over are still so fascinated by those drawings and they still exist. It's just amazing. **4s** Yeah. It's interesting while you're telling me that, I'm like, oh yeah, that's right. If you if you were going to spend the time doing that, you wouldn't be out hunting and gathering. So. **1s** The the rest of the clan would be supporting them.

U1

86:50

And the horses. Um. Wendy Williams book *The Horse* is one of my favorites that talks about a lot of this. And she said the horse was one of the most depicted in *In the Caves*, much less in human history. But but they were I'm sorry. They were. They were at least 30% is what I think. The figure I remember hearing, um, but not always, you know, it wasn't anything necessarily always to do with, um, anything to do with the hunting. It was it was, you know, and, and the way the horses are depicted in, in naturalistic poses and, you know, and whether there were human, you know, there's all sorts of study about it, but it it's just amazing to me that, um, that those, those drawings, that pigment on stone, you know, just incredible the, the whole feeling of it and the pastel that I work with, I often liken it to the feeling of cave paintings in the sense that it's a, it's a earth based mica, you know, any artistic medium is that way, but it feels like Earth. Uh, it's sort of a gritty, soft, um, sand like quality that, that, uh, and the paper I work with

is even a bit like a sand paper, so it's kind of a textured feeling. Uh, similarly, when I, when I work with it.

U2

88:17

What is the paper you work with?

U1

88:20

Uh, one of my favorite papers is called Lockhart, and it is literally, like vegetable fibers on the, uh, that are applied to the paper to give it a tooth. So it's, um, it has a beautiful, uh, natural feel.

U2

88:40

Yeah. I'd never. I'd never given any thought to different types of. Different types of paper. Do you find that you're just drawn to,

U1

88:50

drawn to that type of paper, or do you feel that you can't do the work that you do on a different type of paper? The paper, uh, as the as the as I evolved with pastel and I learned more and more about how to use it. Um, I reached a limitation with the earlier papers that were smoother that I worked with, um, because I wanted to put more layers of color and, and and texture. And I began like it began to where it could no longer take another layer of pastel, for instance. Um, and so I, as they invented this paper, as I about midway through my career, I began working with that and the the moment I found it, it was like, this is almost I don't need to find a different paper ever, because this is everything I. I love to do, though I will say that the smoother papers that I work with, um, are necessary for the the more the spirit sketch style, because it has to have a flow to it that doesn't, um, that continues to move on the paper, whereas the la carte paper is more for layers of realism that that's depth and light and shadow and and effects.

U2

90:14

Um.

U1

90:16

But pastel as a medium is something very beautiful to work with. If anyone who wants to explore it. It's a very intuitive, um. I once read an article by an artist who said one of the reasons he loved pastel was because it was an extension of his hand. It doesn't feel like you're holding a brush or holding something that's that's not tactile. You're actually touching the paper and moving it with your hands. It's like finger painting.

U2

90:45

Come full circle. Come back to finger painting.

U1

90:47

Right? 1s Exactly.

U2

90:51

You start there and you end there. Okay. We should get to some of these questions that you've chosen. And, uh, the first one that you chose was if you could spread a message throughout the world, one that people would listen to. What would that be? Or your favorite quote, or both if you

U1

91:11

choose, are right. Uh, well, I'm not much for remembering words, so I never can remember. Uh. 2s Quotes. But, um. Yeah, my my message would be. 1s Uh, though I will say that as quotes go, I know I would like to recommend the author who I did remember. His name is Hans Heinrich Eisenberg. I love everything he ever wrote about the horse. It's, um, that's the closest thing I ever found to the poetry of the horse. Um, and who who they are as beings. But, um, as far as the message. Yeah, I mean, it's what you explore in your podcast. I would say the the sentience of horses and and how they're not here just to be our servants. Um, the fact that they have such an amazing, um. 1s Uh, generosity of heart and social structure that they want to engage with humans and, and be in partnership with us is always been fascinating to me. Um, and yet there's the dark side of that, uh, of the of the use of the horse in whatever culture. And 1s it's like it even in, in ancient history and looking at all these myths that we explored in our, in our Council of Horses Oracle, there's there was both the, the amazing, um, wisdom of the horse that was so revered in the different cultures. Um, and, and, you know, there was even, uh, we found the concept, it's called hippo Mansi, which was they used horses as a divination tool in early and, uh, don't quote me, but it's like early Grecian or Roman culture where they would ask questions of these horses and depending on how they walked or how they defined what I think, they would put spears on the ground or sticks on the ground, and they would define it like an oracle deck. 1s Um, but you could have a pony and, you know, and the goddess of the horse and, and and whatever on one hand. But then, of course, they were used for war and to carry to carry mankind to conquest. So, um, and, and so the fact that they are our partners is, is equally that they can be used. And so I hope that that more and more people awaken to. Their, um, their sentience. And I, I'm so excited to be in this time in history where people like Linda Kahana and your podcast and people who listen to this are celebrating this incredible being and their wisdom, rather than just what they can do for us, um, on a physical and entertainment level.

U2

94:19

So if you're not good at remembering quotes, I'll give you one last year. Last year at our podcast summit in Australia. Uh, Nahshon Cook was there and he said something that I had to write down, and he wrote down two things in my phone and the notes and my phone out of the whole weekend. 1s Uh. And I had to capture this exactly how he said it. And he said. They are healing the world we used them to conquer.

U1

94:48

Are. 2s That just sinks into my bones.

U2

94:53

Maybe he said they help. Maybe he said they help healing the world we used to conquer. But. Hmm. And it hit me like. Hit me between the eyes like a big stick. And I'm like, I got to write that down before I forget it. Yeah.

U1

95:05

Yeah, absolutely.

U2

95:09

And he wrote two things down. There was that one. And Jane Pike said, there is no balance. There is only balancing.

U1

95:17

Hmm. 2s That's equally beautiful. And.

U2

95:22

Yeah, those are the two things I wrote down from the whole weekend, and there was so much cool stuff. But, yeah, I can I can remember it. But those I wanted to remember, I wanted, like, the exact words they said. 2s Masuku. Okay. Next question for you is what do you feel is your true purpose in the world?

U1

95:42

Well, it segues from the, um. 1s The first, 1s uh, conversation to this, which is. The. My art has given me a way of expressing those feelings of the sentience of horses in ways that people who are skeptical about it maybe even, or are on the verge of discovering it for themselves. Um, it gives them a way to access that. There must be something more, um, because they can't explain their feelings and emotions about a given work of art. And I would go to horse shows and events where there was all manner of, you know, things going on with horses. And invariably people would run across my booth and, and, um, come up to a painting and we'd start talking and they tell me their story of, of their brother who passed away or, or when they lost their first horse, or some kind of emotion would happen that they couldn't explain. They'd be like, I don't even know why I'm telling you this story. And one I remember one night, uh, one woman who was contemplating purchasing this painting that I had called flamenco, and, and she said, I just have to think about it. I really can't afford it, you know, and all of that. And and as she left, I said, you'll probably dream about him tonight. And she came the next day and she said, I dreamt about that painting all night. And, uh, so I, I just am so honored. I, I've had so many of my own spiritual epiphanies around, um, when I felt this way about horses and I wanted to put this into my art. Um, but I really didn't know myself what I was tapping into until I began learning about shamanism and and, uh, learning about Linda Johanna's, um, workshops, having these experiences with horses who were, um, able to be their true selves. And they were, uh, given the opportunity in the setting in which people can receive that information to really shine. And, and I began having these profound experiences of tapping into that wisdom. And once I once I began realizing that what I'd been painting all the way along was, uh, was of that same consciousness, I just felt like I had even more incentive to keep pursuing that goal of trying to reach more and more people who could feel that way about horses and and maybe awaken some that, that were on the cusp of that. And for the betterment of the planet, 2s for the for the horses and for them. Yeah.



U
98:42

Yeah. So what do you. The next question you chose is what do you feel is the luckiest thing that ever happened to you?

U1
98:51

Uh. I was going to tell the story about Jessica in that in that event. So the other, uh, the other experience, I would say, um. Was, I had the honor of presenting a work of art to President Ronald Reagan when he was after he was in office, and that came about in such a magical way. It was, uh, it was definitely a luck kind of thing, um, that, uh, that I had the, the idea and the way of of connecting with him in a way that is just unexplainable, really, but, um, but happened through a series of events, so I can I can share that if you'd like.

U2
99:40

Please do. I'm all ears now. My ears have just bricked up. Did you see them lean forward? Like I'm like a horse when you shake the food bucket.

U1
99:49

Well, it was, uh, a dear family friend had sent me a picture of, uh, Ronald Reagan's horse. And interestingly, it was a liberty shot. It wasn't him riding him. And which is probably why I got my attention. He's a beautiful Arabian horse named El Alamein, and he was given to him when he was president, or sorry, when he was governor of California, um, by the president of Mexico. And, um, and I didn't know at the time what a horseman Ronald Reagan was. Um, but I've since watched documentaries about him, and that's one of the, one of the reasons why they, um, purport to his, you know, his personality and his, um, ability to communicate with people and his, uh, skill as a president was because he was such an incredible horseman and, um, really down to earth and, and, uh, this particular horse, I guess, was actually quite in fact, Linda has written about him in her book. Um, he, he had a fractious nature. So he was a bit of, you know, a bit of a challenge, like no one else could ride him kind of thing. And, uh, but all I knew was he was beautiful. And I actually was hiring a PR firm that was located where I lived on Bainbridge Island and, uh, to try to promote my art. And they one of their, um. Their, uh, on their bio was that they had been former aides of President Reagan when he was in office. And so I said, well, I've got this picture of his horse, you know. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could somehow connect with him? Hint, hint. And, uh, and they, you know, kind of said, well, we'll see. You know, we have we have some connections, but we can't promise anything. But, you know, and so I don't know, about six, eight months went by and they said, if, if you'd like to try, we can we can try to connect. We can't promise anything. So his birthday was coming up in February. I think it was. And I began painting the horse and this beautiful, um, how it evolved even was, you know, the way an artist's mind works is not always a direct line of thinking. So I didn't know exactly what I was going to put in the background. And so I was thinking of the color for a background behind this beautiful running white horse. And, and I was thinking, well, blue is kind of like a royal blue, and red is very rich and, and looks very, you know, and then it's a white horse. And I went, oh. And I thought the, the flag. So that was, you know, roundabout way. Uh, so I painted the American flag behind this beautiful white horse. And, um, I was actually very careful to think, is this even, you know, I knew that the flag has a whole, uh, a whole protocol about how you handle flags, and it's not supposed to touch the Earth and that kind of thing. So is it okay for a horse to be even walking on it? So I kind of depicted it in such a way that he's sort of floating above it. Um, and, uh, so I waited, you know, could we connect with, with his office and, um. They finally came back just at the last minute, like a week before his birthday. They said, well, we have an interesting situation. So, um, President Reagan has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and they've just announced that he's no longer going to be doing public events. He's retiring from public life. Um, however, his staff are really,

um, really heartfelt and want to keep him engaged in life. And they've decided that this might be a nice way to celebrate his birthday. So if you can get on a plane in a week, we'll get you down to meet him and present your painting. And so, my mom and I, the first thing we did was we went shopping to get new outfits to wear. ^{1s} And. And while we're getting the painting framed, I think we maybe had had it framed by that time, but we had no idea. You know, it was the last minute and, um, so very exciting. Uh, got to the airport and, and fortunately, the, the staff that was going with is, um, David had been on his staff and, and he was going to help usher us through this whole, like, felt like the royal welcome, you know, and, and, uh, our way was made clear and we shipped the painting on the plane we were on to make sure that it arrived with us. And so we get to the airport and, uh, we're the first ones, you know, early, early morning in the Seattle airport, um, having taken the ferry from Bainbridge Island to to the, uh, to the airport and were the first ones there were all dressed up. And the flight attendant, uh, gate woman is, um, she just was like, you two look so beautiful. We just don't see people dress up for flight anymore, you know, like. And so we couldn't help it. We had to tell her the story. Well, we're going to meet president, you know, Ronald Reagan, and, uh, and she says, I'm going to upgrade you to first class. So we got to fly first class. So that was so fun. And, uh, we arrived in his offices in Century City. Um, you know, later that early afternoon, and we're get to his office, and it's, you know, you would never know his office was there. It was like a typical office building. Um, and we're but, you know, once you go in the lobby, it was like, uh, the Secret Service agent comes from out behind the counter, and, uh, we ride up in the elevator with the Secret Service agent, and he's. I've got the art in a in a big, like a case. A soft bag and he's checking out the bag, you know, and I'm like, you know, like, there might be something dangerous in there. And as he's doing that, he he peeks at the yard and he says, oh, El Alamein. And I said, yeah. Did you do you know him? Because I'm thinking, you know, he's still living. And he said, well, he passed away about three years ago. And I said, oh, that's even more amazing and sad. But maybe this will, you know, cheer him up. So we get to the upstairs and they usher us into his office, which is, you know, wall to wall awards and everything. And, um, everybody's very formal. And then. President Reagan came out and and shook our hands. And it was adorable because, uh, my mom was so excited to meet him as well. And we made small talk, but they, his, um, personal assistant was introducing us in turn. And there was sort of a brief moment where my mom didn't get noticed. So she walked. She walked up to him, took out her hand and said, hi, I'm Mom, ^{1s} and he's such a gracious man. He just immediately picked right up on that and he he got a big kick out of it. Um, but you could tell, you know, having been around, um, people who'd had been affected by Alzheimer's, I could tell that he was affected and that he wasn't tracking completely. Um, but it was still a pleasure, and his genuine spirit was completely intact. He was very kind and gracious and so I, uh, I had the painting on the floor with facing away from him. And, um, and so I didn't know how this was going to go, you know, and so I, I picked it up and I turned it towards him, and I said, I'd like to present you with a painting of l'Allemagne. And he just he just stood there and looked at it for a long moment. And then his first words were, you did this for me? ^{1s} And it was just it wasn't the Alzheimer's talking. It was his heart. And I really felt that he he just was in awe. He just, you know, took him right out of the formality of the occasion and just heart to heart. And, um, and then we, you know, all post for pictures. And I was totally out of my body at that point. So I, I remember thinking, as, you know, like he took our hand and we're smiling for the camera and it's not like press or anything. It was just his, you know, his, his staff. But it was still an amazing experience. And, um, and I, I thought actually that was the most, um, tactile feeling to have his hand in mind, you know, to stand next to him and to have his hand in mine. I was like, you know, this is just completely unreal. And, um, and his, uh, then his next comment was, uh, I want to hang it in here. And his personal assistant is looking around like, this is a huge painting. There is no way we're going to fit it in here. Um, but the fact that he, you know, even wanted it or would say that was really touching. And, um, so it was, it was quite an amazing experience of of setting, setting an intention, having something so completely, you know, off the radar of something that I ever could dream of and, and, and then having it happen and ironically, later when I talked to his staff, you know, I have to admit, there was a part of me that was like, I'm going to be in people magazine or, you know, something like that. Like, this will be my, my launch into, uh, into notoriety. And uh, uh, they said, well, we can't really broadcast this. This was like, you know, a special, a special condition. And I said, oh, okay, that's fine. I'm just proud of it. And, you know, I can talk about it, but, um. ^{1s} Uh, it is a great honor. And and it was a great experience. And and since then, even knowing, uh, having watched these documentaries and knowing how much the horse means to him and how how that horse in particular. Um, actually, like I said, Linda has has researched it a bit more than I and had interviewed some of the Secret Service agents that knew Reagan at that time, who who literally had to keep up with them because he was such a good horseman that he'd just leave them in the dust. And he

really didn't carry. He wanted to get away from them kind of thing. Um, and go riding. Um, that, that that horse was, was a challenge and, and they had to have the special relationship or he could have never ridden him. And um, and that was just a barometer of the skill and love he had for horses and, and what kept him so grounded and, and, uh, so I think that, um, it was my brush with fame, for sure. And, and the painting is at times hanging in the presidential library. So that really that's really a fantastic thing to to know and feel. Yeah.

U2

111:17

Wow. Tell me, what was it like when were you in the room first. And he walked in. Um, ^{1s} what is it like? Because I think I've experienced this a couple of times. Somebody that you've seen a million times on TV. And then. You see them in real life and it's almost like, you know, have you ever jumped out of a plane?

U1

111:43

I have actually.

U2

111:45

When you go up in a plane for the first time to skydive and you're in the plane, and then the door slides open and then people start rolling out the door, it's there's a I don't know, for me, there was a like. This looks just like the movies, but it's not the movie,

U1

112:03

you know? Did you was

U2

112:05

the. Was there a, you know, because you said at one point in time you had this out-of-body experience when he walked in? Is it is is there like a

U1

112:12

whoa,

U2

112:14

you know, did that happen to you? It was like, yeah, there's there's no running. Oh, no. Absolutely. That was definitely, uh, the feeling and and, um. ^{2s} I cannot tell if it was his presence and my feeling of his celebrity, or if it was, um, the circumstances or anything. But if I put my finger on it, I would say it reminds me of when, uh, when I got married because, um, my, my husband and I had been together 11 years because we considered ourselves married. We just hadn't had a formal wedding. So my idea was, um, this will just be, like, one more beautiful day with my loved one, you know? And it's a way of of commemorating what we have already. So it's not going to be a really, you know, a big like, you know, uh, angels singing the choir kind of moment. It'll be beautiful. But I had no idea that the ceremony and

the event and the being there among witnesses and, uh, everything about that moment in that day was heightened and completely surreal, uh, that it didn't. It's never just about, you know, we're just having a normal day. So that was the same feeling, if I could think of it that way. It was like, this is not a normal experience. And and regardless of whether he's a celebrity or whether I've seen him on TV or who he is or any of that. There is a heightened experience that, um, that there's more going on here. Um, and, um, and then when, when that heightened experience in this case turned into a very. ^{1s} Personal moment and wasn't just the pomp and circumstance or the or press or something that I've actually really grateful that none of that was there because it allowed me to see his heart, um, and him to feel ours, uh, as real people. And and that was more priceless. ^{1s} Mhm.

U1

114:40

Wow. And and yeah.

U2

114:43

Thank you for sharing that story. That is a very very cool story.

U1

114:49

It's a good memory. Yeah.

U2

114:51

Mhm. I bet. Okay. Well it's been such fun hearing your your journey and especially finishing up with that story. That was so cool. Um so how can people find you.

U1

115:04

Yeah. So my website is Spirit of Horse. Com and um, my, as you said, my book, uh, with Linda was the way of the horse. She, she was the gifted author and I did the illustrations and, and then my new book is coming out, um, uh, the Council of Horses Oracle in fall of 2024. And, um, I have e-cards, uh, with my beautiful music and and writings. I'm also a writer. So, um, uh, a lot of those things that I do are writing as well as as art and, um. Yeah, I'm really please reach out to me. I love connecting with people. Uh, and, you know, horses are my favorite subject, so we'll never get enough of them.

U2

115:53

Awesome. Well, thank you so much for joining me. It's been an absolute pleasure. And you guys at home, thanks for joining us. And we'll catch you on the next episode of The Journey On Podcast. Thanks for listening and thanks for having me. ^{2s} Thanks for being a part of the Journey On podcast with Warwick Schiller. Warwick has over 850 full length training videos on his online

U1

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video library at Videos Warwick schiller.com. Be sure to follow Warwick on YouTube,

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Facebook and Instagram to see his latest training, advice and insights.